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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 000708

SIPDIS

STATE FOR IO/HR, EUR/CE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/04/2014

TAGS: PHUM KDEM EZ EUN PREL

SUBJECT: CZECH REPUBLIC PLANNING TO RUN IN 2011 FOR UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

REF: A. PRAGUE 707

1B. STATE 120835

Classified By: Acting POLEC Counselor Michael Dixon for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) In a conversation covering several Human Rights Council matters, such as the upcoming DPRK Universal Periodic Review (Ref A), Czech MFA Human Rights and Transition Policy officer Jan Kaminek commented in depth on the Spring 2010 Human Rights Council elections. Kaminek indicated that the Czechs were not planning to compete for a seat in 2010, rather, they have announced their candidacy for 2011. While the Czechs participate in both the Western Europe and Others Group (WEOG) and the Eastern Europe Group (EEG), they will compete within the EEG in 2011. (Note: In 2008 MFA Human Rights and Transition Policy Director Gabriela Dlouha noted to emboff that while the Czechs had considered competing for a seat on the UNHRC in 2008, the Czechs decided not to pursue this and compete at a later date because they expected to be stretched with the Czech EU Presidency in the first half of ¶2009. End Note.)

Czechs Comment on WEOG and EEG Candidates

¶2. (C) According to Kaminek, only Spain and Switzerland have announced their intentions to run for the two open WEOG seats in spring 2010 elections. The Czechs do not anticipate others will compete within this group. In the EEG there will be two vacancies and Poland, Croatia, and Moldova have announced their candidacy. The Czechs have committed to support the candidacy of Poland and Moldova. In spring 2011, the Czechs will compete against Romania and Georgia for one of the two open seats within the EEG. Kaminek noted that while the Czechs understand the USG rarely announces our support for a particular country until very soon before an election, Kaminek stated that the Czech Republic would welcome USG support of its candidacy.

Czech Alignment, Capacity, and Group Dynamics

¶3. (C) Comment: Per reftel request for post's input regarding the potential suitability for membership in the Human Rights Council, the Czech Republic is a nation committed to the principles of human rights and it is a vigorous advocate of these ideals around the globe.

Alignment: The Czech Republic consistently speaks out on human rights, and is particularly well known for its efforts in Cuba, Burma and Belarus. They are also unabashed about pressing within the European Union for stronger measures against countries that abuse human rights and the Czech views on human rights matters closely align with the USG (with the key exception of how they, and the rest of the EU member

states, view capital punishment).

Capacity: Over the last few years the GOCR has sponsored several conferences with dissidents from oppressive regimes. While the MFA has a relatively small budget, it has identified priority countries for assistance in human rights, among which are Cuba, Burma, and Belarus. The MFA both partners and helps fund some of the work of the Czech NGO community working in these priority nations. The Czech MFA policy makers work closely with their staff assigned to Geneva. The MFA Director of Human Rights and Transformational Policy, Gabriela Dlouha, leads this effort and has been working in the field of Human Rights for several years. She is well respected and known within the EU.

Group Dynamics: The Czech Republic, as a part of the European Union, has a close working partnership with the USG.

At post we have found the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to be especially open and collegial. We have no reason to anticipate any change in the Czech Republic's willingness to continue this engagement.

Thompson-Jones